

Schnaars, Andrew Stevens, Kurt Tahara, Amber VanderReyden, Blake Varab, Mark Wyrick; Bass: Ben Jarvis; Sound Tech: Dawn Supper; Color Guard: Elise Arvidson, Marlene Arvidson, Tiffany Baker, Karen Berndt, Veronica Boggs, Heather Dean, Mikala Ellsworth, Ashley Elsasser, Laken Fordyce, DeAnna Jackson, Danielle Johnson, Leanne Johnson, Brittany Kauffman, Yolo Lopez-Perez, Alyssa Lung, Anne Lypka, Emily Mathieu, Jessica Meade, Alisa Peffley, Julie Reusser, Evanna Rodriguez, Brittany Rushing, Jessica Scott, Rachel Sirinek, Madeline Valle, Kristen Weaver, Megan Whitacre, Chellie Zou, Sara Zou.

The people behind the performers also deserve a note of congratulations. They include Director of Music Gay Burton, Assistant Band Directors Scott Spradling, Bryan Golden, April Oppenheim, and Steve Peterson, Dance & Color Guard instructor Colleen Molnar, Sound Technician Scott Preheim, and Percussion Specialist Derek Felix. Your hard work leading up to and throughout the season, planning the program, scheduling practices, and leading the band at competitions have been rewarded through their accomplishment. Shirley Dyer also deserves a note of thanks for helping make things run smoothly.

Mr. Speaker, as the parent of two teenagers myself, I would be remiss if I didn't also acknowledge the parents that help the band run efficiently. Your dedication to your children shows through on the field of competition in their award-winning performance.

Again, on behalf of very proud parents and the citizens of the Second Congressional District, I would like to congratulate the Concord Marching Minutemen on their Class B State championship.

CONGRATULATING HARRY ARMSTRONG

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 17, 2005

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Clovis City Council member Harry Armstrong of Clovis, California for receiving the Rose Ann Vuich Ethical Leadership Award. The Fresno Bee, The Fresno Business Council and The Maddy Institute at California State University, Fresno sponsor this prestigious award.

Harry Armstrong was born in Merced, California. Upon graduation from Merced Union High School he joined the American Armed Forces and fought in the Korean War. He is married to Jeanine and has three children: Tom, an attorney; Jim a businessman; and, Megan, a teacher.

The basic characteristics to be considered as a candidate for the Rose Ann Vuich Ethical Leadership Award are integrity, strength of character, exemplary ethical behavior, ability to build consensus, serving the public interest and vision for enhancing the community. Mr. Armstrong embodies every one of these characteristics and has set a standard by which all future public servants should use as a guide in their own service to the community.

Harry Armstrong is noted as standing firm against forces that would sweep aside the freedoms and ethics of our democratic form of

government. Never did he blink or stray from his standards and beliefs in the process of public involvement in honest government. He has shown his strength of character in steadily standing by his morals and values.

A member of the Clovis City Council since 1970, Harry is the longest serving council member in the State of California. He was elected Mayor of Clovis on four occasions. Mr. Armstrong's leadership is not limited, however, to the Clovis City Council. He has also served on numerous boards and committees, President of the League of California Cities, Chair of the Fresno County Transportation Authority and the Clovis Planning Commission.

Mr. Armstrong's ability to stand up for what is right and encourage others to do the same is what has given him the continued, never straying, support of the community. His history of involvement and knowledge has created an environment for others to listen and learn.

The leadership and commitment Mr. Armstrong has shown for the community has never wavered, nor his honor in service. He personifies a man of principle and integrity. I am honored to express the gratitude the community has for Harry Armstrong and stand to show our appreciation.

FREEDOM FOR RICARDO RAMOS PEREIRA

HON. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 17, 2005

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about Ricardo Ramos Pereira, a political prisoner in totalitarian Cuba.

Mr. Ramos Pereira is a member of the November 30 Democratic party and a member of the pro-democracy opposition in totalitarian Cuba. Unfortunately, those who believe that freedom, liberty, and the right to worship are the birthright of all men and women are targeted by the tyrant's machinery of repression.

According to an article for the Information Bridge Cuba Miami (IBCM), Mr. Ramos Pereira was arrested on January 25, 2002 for participating in a mass offered on behalf of all the political prisoners in Cuba. IBCM also reports that on February 28, 2002, Mr. Ramos Pereira was arrested for simply participating in a civic activity at the Catholic Church of the Passionists. More than 2 years later, in a sham trial, he was sentenced to 5 years in the totalitarian gulag.

Let me be very clear, Mr. Ramos Pereira is currently languishing in the deprived conditions of the totalitarian gulag for his belief in freedom. The U.S. State Department describes the conditions in the gulag as, "harsh and life threatening." The State Department also reports that police and prison officials beat, neglect, isolate, and deny medical treatment to detainees and prisoners. It is a crime of the highest order that people are imprisoned in these nightmarish conditions simply for their belief in democracy and freedom of religion.

Mr. Ramos Pereira is one of the many heroes of the peaceful Cuban democratic movement who are locked in the dungeons of the dictatorship for their beliefs. They are symbols of freedom and democracy who will always be

remembered when freedom reigns again in Cuba. President Bush addressed those brave men and women who spread the light of freedom in the darkest corners of the world when he said, in his second inaugural address, "Democratic reformers facing repression, prison, or exile can know: America sees you for who you are: the future leaders of your free country."

Mr. Speaker, it is a profound embarrassment for mankind that the world stands by in silence and acquiescence while political prisoners are systematically tortured in totalitarian gulags. My Colleagues, we must demand the immediate and unconditional release of Ricardo Ramos Pereira and every political prisoner in totalitarian Cuba.

A TRIBUTE TO SGT. 1ST CLASS JAMES "JIM" S. OCHSNER

HON. MIKE MCINTYRE

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 17, 2005

Mr. MCINTYRE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Sgt. 1st Class James "Jim" S. Ochsner of Hope Mills, North Carolina, for serving his country valiantly with the 2nd Battalion, 3rd Special Forces Group (Airborne) at Fort Bragg, NC in Operation Enduring Freedom. On November 15, 2005, Sgt. 1st Class Ochsner sacrificed his life when an improvised explosive device was detonated while traveling near Lawara, Afghanistan. He was courageously serving his fourth tour of duty in Afghanistan, and our prayers and heartfelt thanks go to his family in this time of grief.

At an early age, Jim had a desire to serve in the military. His father was a Green Beret who served two tours of duty in Vietnam. Jim was proud of his father's service and commitment and strived to be just like him. In 1987, he enlisted in the U.S. Army as an artilleryman and served three years in Bamberg Germany with the 2nd Battalion 14th Field Artillery. Jim later served in the 82nd Airborne and completed a tour in South Korea before serving as a Special Forces Soldier. In 2004, he graduated from the Special Forces Operations and Intelligence Course and served as an intelligence specialist with the 2nd Battalion, 3rd Special Forces Group.

Jim is a highly decorated soldier, receiving the Bronze Star Medal with oak leaf cluster, the Army Commendation Medal for valor, the Army Commendation Medal for service, the Army Achievement Medal, the Good Conduct Medal and the National Defense Service Medal. In addition, he received the Afghanistan Campaign Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Medal, the Korean Defense Service Medal, the NCO Professional Development Ribbon, the Army Service Ribbon, the Overseas Service Ribbon, the Kuwait Liberation Medal (Saudi Arabia), the Kuwait Liberation Medal (Kuwait), the Combat Infantryman Badge, the Expert Infantryman Badge, the Parachutist Badge, the Air Assault Badge, the Driver and Mechanic Badges, and the Special Forces Tab.

Jim loved his family, and he is survived by his wife Ann, son Nicholas, and daughter Megan, who heard from him often during his deployments. He is also survived by his parents, Robert and Sandra, of Beach Park, Illinois, and his brother MSG Robert Ochsner II.